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homemakers' chat

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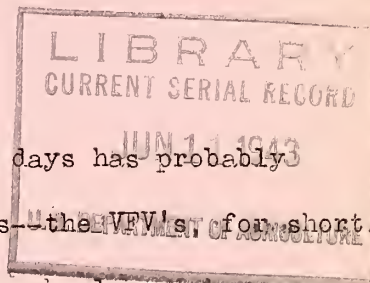
U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, May 24, 1943

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SUBJECT: "THE VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS." Information from extensions officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Every mother of a high school youngster these days has probably heard a good deal about the Victory Farm Volunteers--the VFV's, for short. These are the town and city boys and girls of high school age who are volunteering for work on farms this summer as their way of helping their country in wartime. Every farm family has also probably heard about the VFV's as one source of help on the farm this summer.

You may be wondering how city young people can be of any real use on the farm. You may also be wondering how old these young volunteers will be..whether they will live on the farm and expect city conveniences and a lot of waiting on...whether they will be worth trying out as help this very busy summer.

Agricultural extension workers and high school teachers remind farm families that farm boys and girls have always had plenty to do on the farm.. that city boys and girls will soon learn to take over these jobs. If these young people really want to help win the war, where could they be of more help? And the response from high schools shows that they do want to help and believe they can help most by helping the farmer produce food. What's more, they know pretty well what to expect in living and working on the farm because the schools are teaching them about that.

The schools will do the recruiting and selecting of the VFV's under the direction of the U.S. Office of Education. Then extension workers-- county agents and their assistants will see to placing them on farms and

will keep an eye on the situation after they are placed. The county agent's assistant will visit every VFV on farms in his county regularly to see that everything is working satisfactorily both for the farmer and the volunteer.

Schools are asking farmers, county agents and teachers of agriculture to talk to the young recruits...tell them what kinds of work they can expect on the farm and something about farm living. Some of the recruits will get a little advance training on farm jobs, but most of them will have to learn how to do the work from the farmers who employ them.

As to the age of the volunteers, the schools say any able-bodied boy or girl of 14 years or older who is willing to help with farm work may volunteer, but most of the boys who go out will be around 16 or 17 and the girls 18 or older. Many of these young people will not be working for the first time. Many of the boys have worked during school vacations or after hours to earn money for clothes, books and such. Many of them have had newspaper delivery routes, have mowed lawns, and helped with gardens in town. Of course, that isn't farming, but it is experience in working for others.

Now about where the volunteers live...on the farm as hired hands have, or at home. That depends on the kind of farm and the length of time the farmer needs help.

The kind of farm that has seasonal rushes...days on end when fruit needs thinning, picking or packing... when potatoes need cultivating... on this kind of farm the farmer needs a crew of helpers to carry the rush. Then a crew of VFV's--boys and girls living at home will come out to the farm for work during the day. In a few places the youngsters may live in camps or dormitories. Different farmers will make different arrangements about the noonday meal for their young helpers.

What about wages? The regulations provide that farmers pay VFFV's the same wage rate as other workers in the community doing the same kind and amount of work.

The housewife on the farm can do much to make things go smoothly with these young workers and her husband who employs them. The crews of youngsters who come to work by the day will need plenty of good drinking water... a convenient place to wash-up...and a comfortable place to eat their lunches if they bring their own.

As for the VFFV who lives on the farm all summer and helps with feeding, gathering eggs, keeping records and other such jobs, that youngster needs a comfortable place to sleep, a convenient place to keep clothing and other possessions, and plenty of good simple food to keep fit and in good health. In other ways, too, the farm housewife can help make the venture a mutual success. She can make the youngsters feel that she and her husband appreciate their willingness to take up strange work among strangers. She can help them see the pleasant side of country living as well as the importance of farm work. She can help them meet other young people in the neighborhood and share some of the good times of the 4-H clubs and other groups of farm young people. The farm housewife can be a sort of good-will ambassador, so that when the VFFV's return to town in the fall, they will not only know much more about farming and farm people, but will appreciate the business of farming.

